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Atty. Docket No.: P68897US0

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the currently pending claims as follows:

1. (Original) A tip-up flag device comprising:

a generally disc-shaped housing having a plurality of upwardly extending protrusions on a substantially flat upper surface thereof which include a hollow spool protrusion, a handle assembly and a flag securing post, said hollow spool protrusion forming a corresponding spool cavity in an underside of said housing;

an upwardly extending signaling device mounted on said housing for movement between an upstanding signaling position, a set position adjacent to and generally parallel with said upper surface, and a storage position also adjacent to and generally parallel with said upper surface when engaged by said flag securing post;

a retaining and releasing assembly rotatably supported on said housing for releasably retaining said signaling device in said set position, said retaining assembly including a trip shaft having at least two grooves therein of different depths, said signaling device in said set position being held under said trip shaft and within one of the said grooves; and

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a reel spool assembly connected to said retaining and releasing assembly by a tubular member so as to rotate in relation therewith, said reel spool assembly having a retracted position in which said tubular member is generally parallel with said upper surface and said reel spool assembly fits within said spool cavity so as to be at least flush with said underside, and an in-use position in which the tubular member is generally perpendicular to said upper surface and said trip shaft is positioned so as to retain said signaling device in said set position.

2. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said handle assembly includes two arms upwardly extending from said upper surface of the housing and joined at ends distal from said frame by a crossbar so as to create an opening for lifting and holding said device.

3. (Original) The device as set forth in claim 2, wherein each arm has a light-stick holder formed integrally therewith.

4. (Original) The device as set forth in claim 1, further comprising an integrated tackle compartment extending above said

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housing upper surface and having a plurality of sub-compartments formed therein and covered with a lid hingedly connected thereto.

5. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 4, wherein said lid includes a lid retaining portion and a main portion, said lid mounted using said lid retaining portion on a lid foundation formed integrally with said compartment on said ~~housing-frame~~, said main portion having a downwardly extending lip that partially overhangs side walls and an end wall of said compartment distal from said lid foundation.

6. (Original) The device as set forth in claim 5, wherein said lid is made of molded plastic and has a folding line of reduced material thickness separating said main portion and said lid retaining portion, along which folding line said main portion is folded upwardly for opening of said lid while said lid retaining portion remains secured to said lid foundation.

7. (Original) The device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the handle assembly includes at least one light stick holder integral therewith.

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8. (Original) The device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said reel spool assembly includes a reel having a depending offset handle on a lower flange thereof and a generally disc-shaped rubber hook keeper positioned adjacent said lower flange, said offset handle extending through an aperture in said hook keeper.

9. (Original) The device as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

a line guide having a coiled portion surrounding said tubular member and an integrally formed looped end through which a fishing line is passed, said line guide rotating around said tubular member on said coiled portion; and

a line guide friction mechanism placed in gripping relationship around said tubular member, an elongated clipping portion of said line guide friction mechanism extending over said coiled portion to partially impede rotation of said line guide through friction with said tubular member.

10. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said signaling device includes a flag mounted on a flag wire which is coupled to said housing ~~frame~~ through a spring,

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said ~~flag-wire~~ flag wire having a telescoping construction for variable height adjustment.

11. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim ~~1~~ 10, wherein said upwardly extending protrusions further include an elongated raised portion adjoining said hollow spool protrusion, an upper surface of said elongated raised portion including a flag-wire guiding element within which said flag wire is positioned when said signaling device is in said storage position.

12. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 11, wherein at least part of said tubular member fits within a generally tubular cavity formed on the underside of said ~~frame~~ housing by said elongated raised portion when said reel spool assembly is in said retracted position.

13. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said tubular member extends through an axial bore in an offset tube portion of a central mounting element, said central mounting element being rotatably coupled to said housing by a

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fastening element extending through said central mounting element and through corresponding apertures in said frame.

14. (Original) The device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said hollow spool protrusion, said handle assembly and said flag securing post are appropriately sized and spaced from one another around a circumference of said housing such that a plurality of said tip-up flag devices stack evenly in a stable manner with one another.

15. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 14, wherein tops of said handle assembly and said flag securing post engage an underneath surface of a next adjacent stacked device and said hollow spool protrusion ~~partial~~ partially nests with a spool cavity of said next adjacent stacked device.

16. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said ~~frame~~ housing is made of molded heavy-weight plastic and does not float in water.

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17. (Currently Amended) The tip-up flag device comprising:
- a generally disc-shaped housing having generally flat upper and lower surfaces and a plurality of upwardly extending protrusions on said upper surface including a hollow spool protrusion forming a corresponding spool cavity in said lower surface;
 - a handle integrally formed with and upwardly extending from said housing upper surface;
 - a tackle compartment integrally formed with and upwardly extending from said housing upper surface;
 - a flag securing post integrally formed with and upwardly extending from said housing upper surface;
 - an upwardly extending signaling device mounted on said housing for movement between an upstanding signaling position, a set position adjacent to and generally parallel with said upper surface, and a storage position also adjacent to and generally parallel with said upper surface;
 - a retaining and releasing assembly rotatably supported on said housing for releasably retaining said signaling device in said set position; and
 - a reel spool connected to said retaining and releasing assembly so as to release said signaling device upon rotation of

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said ~~real~~ reel spool, said reel spool having a retracted position in which said reel spool fits within said spool cavity so as not to extend below said lower surface, and an in-use position in which said reel spool is positioned below said upper surface;

said hollow spool protrusion, said handle, said tackle compartment and said flag securing post sized and positioned around a circumference of said housing such that a plurality of said tip-up flag devices stack evenly in a stable manner with a top of said hollow spool protrusion partially nesting within a spool cavity of a next above stacked device.

18. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 16, wherein at least one ~~of the tops~~ top portion of said handle, said tackle compartment, and said flag securing post engage a lower surface of said next above stacked device when said hollow spool protrusion partially nests within said spool cavity of said next above stacked device.

19. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 17, wherein said hollow spool protrusion, said handle ~~portion~~ and said flag securing post are approximately equidistantly spaced from one another around a circumference of said housing and tops

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of said handle and said flag securing post engage a lower surface of said next above stacked device.

20. (Currently Amended) The device as set forth in claim 17, wherein said handle, said tackle compartment, said flag securing post, said signaling device when in said ~~stored~~ storage position, and said retaining and releasing assembly when in said retracted position, all can be confined within a cylinder defined by said circumference of said housing.